GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1418
ANSWERED ON:25.07.2017
Eradication of Witch Hunting
Ajmal Shri Sirajuddin

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of incidents of witch hunting and killings related to such incidents in the country during the last three years and the current year, State/UT-wise;

(b) whether the Government has enacted any law/legislation for the eradication of such practice among the Scheduled Castes and backward sections of the society; and

(c) if so, the details thereof along with the status of implementation of such laws in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
(SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE)

(a): Data in this regard is not maintained by the Ministry.

(b) and (c): An Act of Parliament namely the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities){PoA} Act, 1989, enacted to prevent the commission of offences of atrocities against the members of the Scheduled Castes(SCs) and the Scheduled Tribes(STs) has been amended by the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes(Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 2015(No. 1 of 2016) and enforced on 26.01.2016. Section 3 of the amended Act, inter-alia, specifies that whoever not being a member of a SC or ST causes physical harm or mental agony of a member of a SC or a ST on the allegation of practicing witchcraft or being a witch shall be punishable with imprisonment between six months to five years with fine. Since "Police" and "Public Order" are State subjects under the Seventh Schedule (List-II) to the Constitution of India, the concerned State Governments and Union Territory Administrations are primarily responsible for implementation of provisions of the PoA Act and towards effective implementation thereof, Central assistance is provided to them besides being advised from time to time to implement provisions of the Act in letter and spirit.
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